

The Kemble House
Morristown, Morris County, New Jersey

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District of New Jersey

Historic American Buildings Survey
Seymour Williams, A.I.A., District Officer
133 Central Avenue, Rahway, New Jersey

The Kemble House
Morristown, Morris County, New Jersey

Owner: Mr. and Mrs. Josiah Macy

Date of Erection: About 1750 or later

Architect:

Builder: Peter Kemble

Present Condition: Fair; the building was moved to
its present location in 1840 at
which time a wing was added to
the house

Number of Stories: Two

Materials of Construction: Foundation - stone

Exterior walls - wood

Interior walls - plaster

Roof - pitch, wood shingles

Historical Data:

The original house was built between 1750 and 1765 by Peter Kemble, a famous Tory. Kemble served as presiding officer of the Royal Council of New Jersey. He was originally a resident of New Brunswick and either purchased or obtained by royal grant a large parcel of land and erected his home on the spot which is now part of the front lawn of Charles W. McAlpin's residence.

All the members of the Kemble family were ardent Tories. One daughter was the wife of General Thomas Gage, who was British Commander of the troops in the colonies. A son, Stephen, was Adjutant-General in the British forces in America; incidentally, he was succeeded by Major André. However, the Kembles apparently played safe, for Richard Kemble, the second son, took the oath of allegiance before the Council of Safety in 1777. Samuel, the oldest son, served in the British army and was later collector of the port of New York. Another one of the boys, Peter, became a member of Congress.

When the Pennsylvania Troops were quartered around Fort Mifflin, the Kemble House was occupied by General Anthony Wayne. Washington was a frequent visitor there during the time that the army was at Morristown. Peter Kemble, because of his Tory sympathy, nearly lost his lands, and it was mainly through the efforts of Governor Morris, a very intimate friend, that he was able to retain his property.

One of the most distinguished occupants of the house in the nineteenth century was Judge Duer, who served as president of Columbia University. In 1840, Mr. Henry S. Hoyt, Judge Duer's son-in-law, commenced work on the big stone house which is the present residence of Mr. Charles W. Mc Alpin, and the old Kemble Manor was moved to its present location on the knoll seven hundred yards nearer Morristown.

In 1885 the property was sold by Mr. Hoyt to David H. Mc Alpin. It remained in the McAlpin family until 1927 when it came into the possession of the present owners.

The house was considerably changed when it was moved in 1840; a wing of four or five rooms was added. The main entrance was at one time in what is now the basement. The building was remodelled in the latter part of the nineteenth century. A porch was built on three sides and the entrance elevated to what had been the second floor. A few years ago the old one story porch was ripped off and a new one built. The roof was brought forward and supported on six square columns.

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